

RALEIGH APPEARANCE COMMISSION
Minutes of the Special Meeting
Wednesday, March 10, 2010

Members present: Elizabeth Byrd, Laurent de Comarmond, Andrew Leager, Julieta Sherk, Tom Skolnicki, Ted Van Dyk, and Vincent Whitehurst.

Members not present: Mitch Fluhrer (*excused*), Jim Harris, Tyler Highsmith (*excused*), John Holmes (*excused*), Bang Le (*excused*), Omar McCallop (*excused*), Cindy Szwarcop (*excused*), Stan Williams (*excused*).

Staff present: Deputy Planning Director Ken Bowers, Planning Division Manager Christine Darges, Doug Hill.

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Tom Skolnicki called the meeting to order at 4:05 PM.

NEW BUSINESS

Diagnostic and Approach Report: Raleigh Unified Development Ordinance (UDO)

- Clarifications regarding “mixed-use” designations

Laurent de Comarmond asked about the extent, within areas subject to form-based code provisions, to which uses could be attached to specific built forms. Christine Darges noted that it would depend on location; some elements of form may be addressed through overlays, others through the provisions of Mixed Use districts, geared to context (neighborhood, community, regional). The Future Land Use Map and Growth Framework Map are to guide determining the specific approaches, with the new Code providing finer detail.

- **Discussion of commission recommendations** (from 3/2/10 memorandum to UDO Advisory Group)

1) *Building Material Quality*

Commission members noted other communities have included building materials in their respective design standards (e.g., Greensboro, Cary, Apex, Morrisville). Christine Darges stated staff would have to consult with CodeStudio regarding addressing them in the new Raleigh Code. In discussion, it was noted that the affected buildings would be any that would require commercial permits (including multi-family housing).

2) *Building Orientation and Site Design*

Christine Darges noted that a text change is currently being developed to address general standards, like those noted in the memo. Ken Bowers pointed out that along thoroughfares, it may be more useful to allow an access driveway parallel to the road, and single bay of parking, between the building and the road. Commission members urged that safe, direct pedestrian access be provided from street sidewalks in all cases.

3) *Surface Parking*

Christine Darges stated Code discussion is being guided by the 2008 report, "Right-Sizing Citywide Off-Street Parking Standards". Ken Bowers added that a "soft cap" is under consideration, with provision made for accommodating occasional overflow parking. Commission members reiterated their call for setting maximums, given the impacts of parking on urban form and appearance, particularly along entrance corridors.

4) *Downtown Parking*

Commission members stressed the need for habitable space to wrap any above-ground structured parking. Ken Bowers noted the excess capacity currently available downtown, adding that more needs to be done to make the economics of non-automotive travel more attractive.

5) *Sustainable Development*

Tom Skolnicki voiced the commission's call for initiatives for directing future development away from greenfield areas. Ken Bowers stated that there are a number of sustainability incentives currently under discussion; most would pertain to buildings, but others might address zoning bonuses or infrastructure expenditures. Regarding the former, he pointed out that height/ density bonuses could pose conflicts with potential form-based height limitations.

6) *Open Space*

Christine Darges noted that the Report mentions the need for small parks within neighborhoods. Vincent Whitehurst added that the Code should strive to create interconnected spaces. Tom Skolnicki urged that downtown projects also be called upon to provide open space; Ted Van Dyk added that within a total building envelope, it should be understood that a certain percentage should be public open space.

In other discussion, Christine Darges suggested that the commission may wish to comment on the Report's tree conservation concepts. Tom Skolnicki noted that if corridors are to have viable street trees and/or buffers, relocation of overhead utilities must also be addressed. Vincent Whitehurst urged that corridor cross-sections provide wide separation between traffic and pedestrian ways.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further discussion, the Special Meeting was adjourned at approximately 5:20 PM.